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March 9, 2005

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations.

From: Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, Senior Policy Analyst.

Subject: Briefing memorandum for the hearing *Building Iraqi Security Forces*, scheduled for Monday, March 14, 2005 at 12:00 noon, room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

PURPOSE OF THE HEARING

The hearing will examine the plans for creating Iraqi security forces capable of assuming Iraq's internal security mission.

HEARING ISSUES

- 1. What is the current strategy for training and equipping Iraqi security forces to assume internal security missions now conducted by Coalition forces?**
- 2. What are the challenges of transferring the internal security mission to Iraqi forces?**

BACKGROUND

On February 12, 2005, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld shuttled around Iraq to observe Iraqi security and military units. "There's no question progress has been made," Rumsfeld said of Iraqi forces. "The professionalism of these units is advancing." (**Attachment 1**)

In talks with soldiers, both Iraqi and American, Rumsfeld emphasized the importance of handing over security to Iraqi forces. "Once they have that confidence, that capacity and capability, our forces, Coalition forces, will be able to go home," Rumsfeld told US troops in Mosul in Northern Iraq. "And go home with the honor you will have earned." Ultimately, American forces can only help, he said. "It is the Iraqis who will have to over time defeat the insurgency." (**Attachment 1**)

General George W. Casey Jr., the US commander in Iraq, in late January 2005 said:

Can I sit here and look you in the eye and say that the Iraqi security forces guaranteed 100 percent are going to be able to defeat this insurgency themselves? Of course not.... [But] we cannot stay here forever in the numbers that we are here now; I firmly believe that. The Iraqis have to take ownership of this.

(Web Resource 1, pg. 95)

While in Iraq, Chairman Shays and a Congressional Delegation met with Lieutenant General David Petraus, Commander, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq, which is charged with training Iraqi security forces. Petraus told the delegation,

“In the near term a political agreement is required, and for long-term stability to take place the economy must improve. But none of this can happen without a secure environment, and it will be up to the Iraqi security forces to bring about this security.”¹

When Coalition forces first entered Baghdad in April 2003, there were few Iraqi police patrols and many in the Iraqi Army put down their weapons and went home. The inadequate number of security forces, both civilian and military, allowed lawlessness to flourish and an insurgency to gain ground.

The disbandment of all Iraqi military forces and wholesale de-Baathification of government officials ordered by Ambassador Paul Bremer, Director of the Coalition Provisional Authority, compounded an already difficult situation. The lawlessness and insurgency continued throughout 2003 and 2004. By the end of 2004, immediately prior to the Iraqi elections, it became apparent additional Coalition forces were needed to provide a more secure environment for democratic elections to take place. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 5)**

On January 30, 2005, Election Day, there were approximately 175,000 Coalition forces in Iraq, along side some 136,000 trained and equipped Iraqis. The 175,000 consisted of approximately 150,000 US forces and 24,500 other (excluding US) Coalition forces. Sizable air, naval and Special Operations Units supported these forces from within Iraq and across the region. This month the United States plans to reduce troop presence by some 15,000 troops. There will also be a drawdown (approximately 1000) of other Coalition forces, leaving a total Coalition force level of some 159,000, along with growing Iraqi security forces. **(Attachment 2)**

Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq (MNST-I)

MNSTC-I is a Department of Defense (DoD) operation reporting through Multi-National Force-Iraq to Central Command. Along with DoD, the Department of State and other US agencies provide support, training police and other security forces. The three main sections of MNSTC-I consist of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT), the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT), and the Joint Headquarters Advisory Support Team (JHQ). **(Attachment 3)**

The MNSTC-I mission is to

“Organize, train, equip, and mentor Iraqi security forces, in order to support Iraq’s ultimate goal of a unified, stable and democratic Iraq, which provides

¹ CODEL Shays consisted of Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), Representative Ted Poe (R-TX), et al. and visited Iraq during the period January 30-31, 2005. The delegation met with President al-Yawar in his office on the day of the election, January 30, 2005.

a representative government for the Iraqi people; is underpinned by new and protected freedoms for all Iraqis and a growing market economy; and is able to defend itself and not pose a threat to the region.”

(Attachment 3)

Within the Defense Department portion of the FY 2005 Supplemental, the Administration requests \$5.7 billion for Iraq security forces. These funds would support training, equipping, and deploying of military, protective services, and border personnel, and police training. The resources would be provided to the Multi-National Security Transition Command — Iraq, and fall under the authority of the Secretary of Defense. The \$5.7B would be divided among the front line security forces (\$3.1B), police and other forces (\$1.5B), support forces (\$810M), quick response funding (\$180M), and institutional training (\$104M).

(Attachment 3)

Iraqi Security Forces

Most Iraqi security forces are controlled by two Iraqi ministries—the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Defense (MOD). The MOI forces consist primarily of the Iraqi Police Service, Department of Border Enforcement, and Facilities Protection Service. The MOD forces include the Iraqi Army, Coastal Defense and Air Forces. Other Ministries are in charge of the Diplomatic Protective Services, Oil Security Forces, Rail Police and Electricity Power Security Forces. **(Attachment 4)**

Ministry of Interior Security Forces

The Iraqi Police Service is further divided into a Provincial Police Department, a Bureau of Dignitary Protection, an Emergency Response Unit, a Highway Patrol Force, and the Police Civil Intervention Force. The Department of Border Enforcement controls the Iraqi Border Police, Customs Department, Immigration Department, and the Iraqi Riverine Police. The Facilities Protection Service is a standalone entity focused on protecting critical infrastructures. General John P. Abizaid, Commander, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said, MNSTC-I is focused on a goal of 135,000 trained and effective police. The Command is partnering with Jordan and Egypt on a police training program featuring a 3-week transition school for police with prior experience, and an 8-week academy regimen for new entrants. **(Attachment 2)**

As of early 2005, some 30,000 Iraqi police have completed the three-week Transition Integration Training Program, and over 12,000 have completed the 8- week Academy Training program. MNSTC-I is expanding the capacity of academy training programs in Jordan and Baghdad and in new regional academies across Iraq. Expansion has increased the police academy graduation rate to approximately 5,000 per month. MNSTC-I is also assisting the MOI in the development of specialized policing capabilities including Special Police

Commandos, an Emergency Response Unit, a Bureau of Dignitary Protection, and a Civil Intervention Force. **(Attachment 2)**

The Special Police Commandos will eventually consist of six operational battalions. The Emergency Response Unit will augment the regular police with a special operations police capability and be responsible for high-risk arrests, hostage rescue, and explosive ordnance disposal. The Bureau of Dignitary Protection will be responsible for protecting Iraqi government leaders. The Civil Intervention Force will provide a national, high-end, rapid response police capability to counter large-scale civil disobedience and insurgency. **(Attachment 2)**

In concert with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), MNSTC-I provides training for the Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement (DBE). Iraqi border control training is a 4-week training program at the Jordanian International Police Training Center. MNSTC-I is assisting with infrastructure development for over 300 border posts and 15 ports of entry. As of early 2005, 35 border forts are complete, with 74 forts under construction or refurbishment. Four (4) of 15 ports of entry are under construction or being rebuilt. MNSTC-I and DHS have also provided Iraqi Border Department with new technologies to control Iraq's lengthy borders. **(Attachment 2)**

Ministry of Defense Security Forces

General Abizaid said the Iraqi Army is divided into the Iraqi Regular Army (RA), Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF), Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), Iraqi National Guard (ING), and a Presidential Brigade. A small air force and a coastal defense service round out the defense forces. **(Attachment 2)**

Most of the soldiers receive eight weeks of basic training. This consists of instruction in weapons, marching, discipline, and physical training. To beef up the ranks, an accelerated program is under way for new recruits who were soldiers or officers in Saddam Hussein's army. These forces receive three weeks of US training before joining army units. **(Attachment 5)**

Iraqi Intervention Force soldiers are slated to complete an additional six weeks of training in street fighting, building-clearing operations, and other techniques necessary for anti-insurgent operations in cities and towns. The Iraqi Special Operations Forces receive intensive training in unconventional warfare operations, counterterrorism, survival, and escape skills that lasts 12 weeks or more. There are two Special Forces battalions. The 36th Commando Battalion consists of militia fighters linked to political parties who opposed Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi Counterterrorism Battalion receives specialized training in tracking terrorists. The Iraqi Ministry of Defense plans to create a third Special Forces battalion in the coming months. **(Attachment 5)**

Iraqi National Guard (ING) receives three weeks of formal training following the Iraqi army model, focusing on weapons instruction, marching, and physical fitness. Afterward, troops continue on-the-job training by conducting operations with Coalition forces. National Guard forces are recruited and serve in regions where they live, often returning home at night after conducting operations or joint patrols with US forces. As with the US National Guard, Iraqi guardsmen serve part-time but are subject to full-time deployments. **(Attachment 5)**

In response to a July 2004 request from Prime Minister Allawi, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established a NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I). NATO will establish an Iraqi Training Command, and an Iraqi Training, Doctrine, and Education Center. In addition, NATO will help establish a War College and assist in the development of the Iraqi Armed Forces Joint Headquarters. **(Attachment 2)**

Status of Iraqi Security Forces

The March 2, 2005 *Iraq Weekly Status Report*, prepared by the Department of State, indicates there are a total of 141,761 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces: 82,072 Ministry of Interior Forces, including police forces, and 59,689 Minister of Defense Forces. These trained forces have been equipped with uniforms, helmets, body armor, radios, weapons and ammunition, and communications gear. **(Attachment 6)**

As of mid-February 2005, Iraq's total Army consists of over 70 battalions, 24 of which are operational regular army battalions, with 3 in training; 4 separate, special battalions; and a transportation battalion, with 42 of those fielded ING battalions, and another 8 in training. Twelve (12) of the 24 operational Regular Army battalions are basic Iraqi army units. **(Attachment 2)**

The Iraqi Intervention Force has the other 12 operational battalions, with ISOF and the Presidential Brigade now fielding 2 operational battalions each. Of further note, a first battalion of the initial Iraqi armored brigade stood-up in time to help with security for the January 2005 elections. The fielding and training of the mechanized brigade will continue throughout 2005. **(Attachment 2)**

The Iraqi Air Force (IAF) established a limited capability in September 2004. Designed for tactical support and air mobility missions, the IAF has 3 operational squadrons of 9 aircraft as of February 2005. It will continue development in the coming year. After successful training by the British Coalition partners, the Iraqi Coastal Defense Force (ICDF) is now at full operational capability, with five 100-foot patrol craft, 34 smaller vessels and a naval infantry regiment. The ICDF is helping to secure Iraq's maritime oil export infrastructure, oil platforms in the Arabian Gulf and Iraq's coastal waters. **(Attachment 2)**

General Abizaid points out that the Iraqi Regular Army and Intervention force battalions have been deployed as part of the Coalition mission to combat the insurgency. To date, their mission

in a counterinsurgency role has consisted of route security, force protection, and patrol and cordon operations. **(Attachment 2)**

The employment of newly-formed Iraqi security forces produced some disappointments during the past year, including the performance of Iraqi Army units in Fallujah and Ramadi (April-May 2004), police in Western Baghdad (August-October 2004), and police in Mosul (November 2004). Conversely, focused training and mentoring of Iraqi Intervention Forces, Iraqi Special Operating Forces, and National Guard Forces generated capable and competent units that contributed to successful Coalition operations in Najaf and Kufa (August 2004), Samara (September 2004) and Fallujah (November 2004). **(Attachment 2)**

From these and other operations the Coalition has learned that quality mentoring by professional Coalition forces is essential to successful Iraqi units, and the plan is for Coalition forces to increase mentoring of fielded Iraqi forces.

The Insurgency

The Iraqi insurgency is predominantly Sunni Arab. The insurgency consists of three major elements: Former Regime Elements (FRE), indigenous religious extremists and criminal gangs, and al-Qaida-affiliated transnational terrorists. These disparate groups have varying motivations, but are unified in opposition to Coalition presence and a refusal to accept the legitimacy of the new Iraqi government. They loosely coordinate anti-Coalition attacks, but do not display centralized command and control, or a shared vision for Iraq's future. **(Attachment 2)**

This Sunni insurgency is limited in scope, and mainly confined to four (4) of Iraq's eighteen (18) provinces. It is led by FRE from Saddam's old security and Intelligence Services. The FRE is loosely affiliated with junior partners from Iraq's extremist and criminal communities and with the ideologically-driven foreign fighters who come to Iraq committed to terrorism in the name of Jihad. FRE dominate the insurgency and seek a return to power. They employ a campaign of mass intimidation against the Sunni population coupled with stand-off attacks against Coalition forces, Iraqi security forces, governmental figures and international assistants to the Iraqi government. **(Attachment 2)**

Indigenous Iraqi extremists and criminal organizations also participate in the insurgency. Their numbers are limited and their motivations range from profiteering to eviction of foreign forces from Iraqi soil. Criminal elements exploit the money available to the FRE, offering services ranging from kidnapping to stand-off attacks for compensation. Indigenous Iraqi extremists work loosely with FRE and foreign Jihadists, and include home-grown terrorist groups like Ansar al Islam and Ansar al Sunna. They are more likely to use suicide bombers and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and also conduct attacks against targets in the Iraqi Kurdish and Shia communities. **(Attachment 2)**

The foreign terrorists gravitated to Iraq to kill Coalition forces and to establish an extremist state, or at least an extremist safe-haven. Small in number, but zealous in their methods, these ideologically-driven terrorists are the most dangerous to Iraqi peace and stability over the long-haul, and are orchestrated by Jordanian expatriate Musab al Zarqawi and his followers.

(Attachment 2)

The Iraqi Interim Government claims 16 of Iraq's 18 provinces are secure. However, General Abizaid said there are four provinces with particularly difficult security situations including western Baghdad, Al Anbar, Nineveh and Saahuddin. Yet, even in areas where insurgents operate and have significant local influence, populations are divided and are rarely under insurgent control. If one looks at the total population of all the scattered cities and areas where insurgents and terrorists largely dominate, it does not exceed 6-9% of Iraq's total population.

(Web Resource 1, pg. 79)

At the same time major insurgent attacks have occurred in Baghdad, Mosul, Karbala, and Najaf. The US lost 24 men and 60 were wounded in one attack on a mess tent in Mosul on December 21, 2004. Some 68 Iraqis were killed in attacks in Karbala and Najaf a few days earlier, and some 175 wounded. The Sunni triangle, the area along the Tigris, and the "triangle of death" south of Baghdad are all areas of intense Sunni insurgent activity, and the stability of Shi'ite and Kurdish areas remains uncertain. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 80)**

Estimates on the number of insurgents vary widely. Most US military estimates range between 8,000 and 12,000, perhaps reaching as high as 20,000. Iraqi intelligence officials believe the figure is closer to 200,000, with a core of 40,000 fighters and another 160,000 supporters. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 79)**

DISCUSSION OF HEARING ISSUES

1. What is the current strategy for training and equipping Iraqi security forces to assume internal security missions now conducted by Coalition forces?

Building effective Iraqi military and security forces is only one of the elements necessary to implement a successful strategy in Iraq. However, it is the critical element for the creation of a legitimate government in Iraq, and establishment of stability and security necessary for Iraq's political and economic development.

(Web Resource 1, pg. 97)

Although there is no unclassified document outlining a strategy for developing Iraqi security forces and transferring control of the security mission to these forces, statements by officials indicate the current strategy entails; 1) acquiring, training and equipping Iraqis for security force duties, 2) using Coalition forces to mentor Iraqi forces by imbedding Coalition forces with Iraqi forces, and 3) replacing Coalition forces with capable Iraqi security forces.

At a January 29, 2005 confirmation hearing, Secretary of State designee, Dr. Condoleezza Rice referred to the process of acquiring Iraqi security forces. She said there is no lack of enthusiasm on the part of Iraqis to sign up for the military and "The Iraqis themselves are spending time vetting people." **(Attachment 7)** The overall manning and quality of the Iraqi security and military forces is slowly improving, and the effort to build up Iraqi forces has gathered serious momentum. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 73)** Equipment deliveries also seem to be increasing. What is not known is if the equipment is of the right type, what the Iraqis want and whether it is being sent to the correct units. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 63)**

Retired US Army General Gary Luck was sent to Iraq by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to determine how to accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces and shift responsibility for security from Coalition forces to Iraqi security forces. General Luck believes Coalition forces should be perceived as helpers, not occupiers, and commanders must move quickly to shift the current perception of the United States as occupiers. General Luck said the commanders have a plan, General Petraeus is having an impact, and the Iraqi security forces have a good chance at becoming more capable over time. General Luck believes the next step in training Iraqi security forces is for them to train as units, similar to the training US troops receive after they graduate from individual training and are assigned to a unit.²

General Luck also recommends strengthening Iraqi security forces with American advisors. Last month it was reported that as many as 4,000 soldiers would be cut away from their units

² Telephone discussion between General (Retired) Gary Luck and Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, Senior Analyst, Subcommittee on National Security, Committee on Government Reform, US House of Representatives, March 1, 2005.

and assigned to Iraqi divisions, battalions, and companies as military advisors. Other troops rotating into Iraq over the next few months will be assigned as advisers from the outset. In addition 10-man police advisory teams will be assigned to work with the troubled Iraqi police force. The plan envisions up to 70 advisors per battalion. Their role would be twofold: to train the Iraqis and to provide a link for US air strikes, medical evacuation, and logistical support. **(Attachment 8)**

The United States is again learning the lessons of counterinsurgency. We continually fail to examine what happened in the past and apply those lessons to current situations. We attempted Vietnamization more than 30 years ago. Commanders in the field are now using the term, Iraqization. The solution for Iraq is to create strong Iraqi military security forces as soon as possible, and keep up the effort regardless of any near term problems and reversals. This either has to be made to work or Iraq turns out the same as Vietnam: Coalition military victories become irrelevant. **(Web Resource 1, pg. 95)**

2. What are the challenges of transferring the internal security mission to Iraqi forces?

There are a number of challenges confronting Generals Casey and Petraeus as they transfer the mission of Iraq internal security to Iraqi security forces. For the last 30 plus years most Iraqis had no voice in government and relied on Saddam Hussein's regime to provide for them, tell them what to do, and how to do it. Because of this many Iraqis are reluctant to strike out on their own and make their own decisions. They are beginning to learn from this new found freedom, but they also need some motivation and guidance from the Iraqi government. Although Iraq had an election, the government is new, and the leadership is in transition. As General Luck points out the Iraqi government should be taking over the mission of Iraq security. This will provide an incentive for the military to follow. The Coalition forces should be perceived as assisting the Iraqi security forces. **(Attachment 8)**

Understanding the insurgents is problematic. If we do not know the size or composition of the insurgents it is extremely difficult to defeat it. The estimates of the number and type of insurgents vary widely, in some cases from thousands to tens of thousands. Insurgents have evolved, and terrorists have grown in capability and size. The insurgents have also learned how to use their weapons, building more sophisticated improvised explosive devices, and planning attacks and ambushes. **(Web Resource 1, pgs. 79-80)**

As one US Marine specializing in counterinsurgency in Iraq recently noted, "Seizing the components of suicide bombs is like making drug seizures, comforting, but ultimately pointless. There will always be more."
(Web Resource 1, pgs. 79-80)

Time is not on our side. General Luck points out occupation in an Arab land cannot be a long-term strategy. He believes the United States has a limited window of opportunity. The

evidence supports his belief. Poll results released before the election show that only 18 percent of Iraqis in Baghdad and areas nearby support the United States presence in Iraq. **(Attachment 8)**

There is also a concern that the ethnic-sectarian nature of the burgeoning insurgency is undermining US and Iraqi efforts to create a unified Iraqi Security Force that can prevent internal insurgent violence from metastasizing into a larger Iraqi civil war among Sunnis and Iraqi Shiites and Kurds. **(Attachment 9)**

There are many challenges ahead developing an Iraqi Security Force and transferring the security force mission to Iraqis. In most cases Iraqi security forces are training to fight as they fight. However these challenges can be overcome, and the sooner Iraqi security forces replace Coalition forces the sooner the number of Coalition Force casualties will decrease, and the quicker the Iraqis will be able to bring about stability in their country.

ATTACHMENTS

1. John J. Lumpkin, "Rumsfeld tours Iraq, sees security forces in mock assault," *The Associated Press*, February 11, 2005.
2. Partial Statement of General John P. Abizaid, United States Army Commander, United States Central Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 2005 Posture of the United States Central Command, March 1, 2005.
3. Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq Fact Sheet and Briefing on Department of Defense FY2005 Supplemental Request for Iraq/Afghanistan Security Forces, undated.
4. Briefing Slide on Organization of Iraqi security forces provided to Congressional Delegation Shays by General Patraeus, Baghdad, Iraq, January 31, 2005.
5. Council on Foreign Relations Fact Sheet on Iraq, Training Iraqi security forces, January 27, 2005.
6. Department of State Briefing Slide on Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense Iraqi security forces, February 28, 2005 and Briefing Slide on Equipment Issued since July 1, 2005 to Iraqi security forces provided to Congressional Delegation Shays by General Patraeus, Baghdad, Iraq, January 31, 2005.
7. Robin Wright and Josh White, "US Plans New Tack After Iraq Elections," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2005.
8. Linda Robinson, "Ready or Not," *US News and World Report*, February 28, 2005.

9. Jeremy M. Sharp, Memorandum to House Committee on Government Reform, Creating a Unified Iraqi Security Force, *Congressional Research Service*, March 3, 2005.

WEB RESOURCES

1. Anthony Cordesman, "Strengthening Iraqi Military and Security Forces," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 17, 2005, found at web site http://www.csis.org/features/iraq_strengtheningforces.pdf

WITNESSES

Panel I

The Honorable Peter W. Rodman

Assistant Secretary of Defense
International Security Affairs
Department of Defense

Lieutenant General Walter L. Sharp

Director, Strategic Plans and Policy
The Joint Chiefs of Staff

Brigadier General Douglas Lute

Director of Operations
US Central Command
(Invited)

Representative

Department of State

Panel II

Professor Anthony H. Cordesman

Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Professor Kalev Sepp

Professor
Naval Post Graduate School

Mr. Peter Khalil

Former Coalition Provisional Authority Official
The Brookings Institution